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NEWS RELEASE

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Counterfeit Poker Chips Lands Missouri Man on Home Detention

U.S. Attorney Thomas Scott Woodward announced that a 50 year-old man was sentenced in federal court today for stealing \$70,000 from a northeastern Oklahoma casino.

William Reece Lancaster, of Joplin, Missouri, was sentenced by Chief U.S. District Judge Claire V. Eagan to five years probation (first six months on home detention) and was ordered to pay restitution of \$70,000. He had pleaded guilty on December 17, 2009, to the charge of Theft from a Gaming Establishment on Indian Land in Excess of \$1,000. The charges were contained in a Grand Jury indictment returned in November 2009.

The final theft, using counterfeit poker chips, resulted in Lancaster's arrest on October 8, 2009, at the Seneca Cayuga Grand Lake Casino near Grove, Oklahoma. Lancaster admitted that he used a special process of bleaching and dyeing legitimate .25 cent poker chips to match the casino's \$500 chips. He would then introduce the counterfeit chips into play at the blackjack tables or exchange them for cash at the cashier's window. He used this method to steal approximately \$70,000 from the casino.

The crime was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Law Enforcement Services. Assistant U.S. Attorney R. Trent Shores represented the government in this case. The prosecution proceeded in federal court because the crime occurred on land designated as Indian Country, where major criminal offenses fall under the jurisdiction of the United States Courts.